Short Form BA/BE
South Orogrande Exploration Drilling

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Date: June 10, 2020

Project Sponsor: Marty Jones, USFS Minerals Administrator
Phone/email: (208) 983-5158/martin.jones@usda.gov
Address: 104 Airport Road, Grangeville, ID 83530

Lead Action Agency Contact: Curtis Caton, USFS Minerals Program Manager
Phone/email: 208-935-4262/curtis.caton@usda.gov
Address: 903 3rd St. Kamiah, ID 83536

Describe any coordination with NMFS and USFWS (including any correspondence). Specify contact personnel and dates:

South Orogrande Exploration Drilling project was introduced to NMFS and USFWS at Level I consultation on June 18, 2020.

Location(s) of activity:
T26N, R7E, Sections 1 and 12
T26N, R8e, Sections 1 and 13
T27N, R7E, Sections 11 and 36
T27N, R8E, Section 31
Boise Meridian

County: Idaho

Watershed and Stream Names: Big Creek

ESA-listed species present at the project site:

Species	Present?	Species	Present?
Spring/Summer Chinook	No	Canada Lynx	No
Fall Chinook	No	Northern Idaho Ground Squirrel	No
Sockeye	No	Spalding's Catchfly	No
Steelhead	No	Macfarlane's Four -O'clock	No
Bull Trout	No	Water Howellia	No
		Yellow-billed Cuckoo	No

Determination of Effects:

Species/Habitat	Status	Determination
Snake River Sockeye Salmon *Oncorhynchus nerka*	E/CH	No Effect
Snake River Fall Chinook *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*	T/CH	No Effect
Snake River Spring Chinook Salmon *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*	T/CH	No Effect
Snake River Steelhead trout *Oncorhynchus mykiss*	T	No Effect
Snake River Steelhead trout *Oncorhynchus mykiss*	CH	No Effect
Columbia River Bull trout *Salvelinus confluentis*	T	No Effect
Columbia River Bull trout *Salvelinus confluentis*	CH	No Effect
Westslope Cutthroat trout *Oncorhynchus clarkii lewisi*	S	May impact individuals but would not lead to a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
Interior redband trout *Oncorhynchus mykiss gairdneri*	S	No Impact
Pacific Lamprey *Entosphenus tridentatus*	S	No Impact
Western Pearlshell Mussel *Margaritifera falcata*	S	No Impact

E=Endangered, T=Threatened, S=Sensitive, CH=Critical Habitat

Rationale:

- No T&E species are present in the action area, the nearest known occurrence of T&E species (e.g. steelhead, salmon) is more than five miles downstream in the Salmon River.
- No designated critical habitat exists in the action area, the nearest designated critical habitat is more than five miles downstream.

Specific mitigation action(s).

Action Category	Specific actions included in this BA	Check all that apply
Fish Screening	Install, upgrade, or maintain fish screens *(NMFS must review engineering plans for installation or upgrading of screens)*	X
Fish Passage	Install or improve fish passage facilities (e.g. fish ladders or other fishways) at diversion structures and other passage barriers *(NMFS must review engineering plans)* Remove or modify water control structures (e.g., irrigation diversion structures) Replace culverts and bridges to provide fish passage and/or to reduce risk of culvert failure and chronic sedimentation, using the stream simulation methods from NMFS (2011b).	
Instream Flow	Lease or purchase water rights to improve instream flows Change or consolidate points of diversion *(NMFS must review engineering plans)* Increase efficiency of irrigation practices (e.g. convert open ditches to pipes, or convert surface water diversion to ground water well)	
Instream Structures	Install instream habitat structures including • Rootwads, large woody debris (LWD), and log jams • Boulders • Spawning gravels Install beaver dam analogs consisting of posts woven with willow/ alder. Structures will be approximately half width of channel	
Side Channels and Floodplain Function	Reconnect and restore historic side channels Modify or remove levees, dikes, berms, and fill	

Action Category	Specific actions included in this BA	Check all that apply
Channel Reconstruction	Reconstruction of existing stream channels into historic or newly constructed channels *(NMFS must review engineering plans).*	
Riparian Habitat	Plant riparian vegetation Reduce riparian impacts from livestock: • Install fencing • Develop livestock watering facilities away from streams • Install livestock stream crossings (culverts, bridges, or hardened fords) Control invasive weeds through physical removal or with herbicides Stabilize stream banks through bioengineering	
Road and Trail Erosion Control, Maintenance, and Decommissioning	Decommission or obliterate unneeded roads Relocate portions of roads and trails away from riparian buffer areas When part of a larger restoration project, reduce sediment from existing roads: • Improve and maintain road drainage features • Reduce road access and usage through gates, fences, boulders, logs, tank traps, and signs • Remove or stabilize pre-existing cut and fill or slide material Reduce sediment delivery to streams from other man-made sources	**X**
Surveying and Monitoring	Survey project sites: • Take physical measurements • Install recording devices • Determine fish presence (*electroshocking for research purposes is not included under this consultation*) Monitor project site and stream habitat after project completion Installation of PIT tag detection arrays	

SMALL NEPA PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests

Project Name	South Orogrande Exploration Drilling
District Name (or "Forestwide")	Red River
County where project located?	Idaho
FS Personnel Name, Phone Number and Email *If a partnership, please add name, phone and email; however, **an FS employee MUST BE the project proponent** and point of contact.*	Marty Jones, martin.jones@usda.gov (208) 553-1311
Legal Location	T26N, R7E, Sections 1 and 12 T26N, R8e, Sections 1 and 13 T27N, R7E, Sections 11 and 36 T27N, R8E, Section 31 Boise Meridian
Decision Maker's Name	Terry Nevius
Is the project associated with meeting a Forest target?	No
Which CE Category does this project fit?	36 CFR 220.6(e)(8)**:** Short-term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads.

At what level does the Decision Maker want the project scoped?

Internal ___ External* _X_

Internal scoping will be through the Small NEPA IDT, unless otherwise specified. Scoping would be documented in the Extraordinary Circumstances Checklist.

External scoping will be with the public via a scoping letter, a legal notice, and the scoping letter posted on the NPCWNF website. The Project will only be scoped to the Tribe(s) et al (see block below) unless otherwise specified.

Provide a list of the individuals, groups, agencies, etc. (other than those listed below*) with their mailing address and/or email address, of those who will be included for *External* Scoping.

- DO NOT provide only a name.
- DO NOT leave this box blank: **If no additional individuals are to be externally scoped please enter NA**.

Gold Lion Resources
1859 Whitney Mesa Drive
Henderson, NV 89014

Does the Decision Maker want a Legal Notice published in the Lewiston Tribune? Yes _X__ No ___

The scoping period will be 14 days unless the Decision Maker wants to change it. 14__ Days

What Level of Analysis (below) does the Decision Maker want for the Project?

_____ **Low level:** Choose this level if the project's level of public scrutiny is expected to be relatively low or unknown. Documentation for low level analysis projects would be a completed Extraordinary Circumstances checklist filled out by the specialists, including the name of the specialist who performed the analysis, the project name, and date it was completed. No other written documentation would be generated.

__X__ **Moderate level:** Choose this level if the project's level of public scrutiny is expected to be relatively moderate to high. In this case, specialists would complete the Extraordinary Circumstances checklist with the only write up being for resources that are present and the rationale for the effects call. No write up would be given for items in the checklist that are not present.

If the determination is no effect (which most CE's should have zero to very little adverse effects), then document *why* that determination was made in one paragraph or less. If the determination is an adverse effect, then *why* that determination was made would be written in less than three paragraphs.

List the Management Area(s) in which your project is located.

12, 17, 20

What are the Management Area(s)' Goals and Standards?

MANAGEMENT AREA 12 (539,884 acres)

A. Description

Management Area 12 consists primarily of forested lands. Timber productivity classes 3, 4, 5, and 6 are represented as are a variety of commercially valuable, softwood tree species. A variety of physical and biological environments occur as determined by soil, slope, aspect, elevation (approximately 3,800-6,500 feet), and climatic factors. This management area occurs across the entire nonclassified portion of the Forest. Although this management area consists primarily of productive forest land, there are minor inclusions of nonforest and low productivity forest lands.

This management area contains inclusions of other management areas as shown below:
In addition to the 539,884 acres mapped for this management area, there are approximately 29,193 acres of this management emphasis which occur as inclusions in other management areas.

B. Goals

Manage for timber production and other multiple uses on a sustained yield basis. Develop equal distribution of age classes to optimize sustained timber production. Manage at levels and intensities consistent with the schedules described in this plan to provide for other multiple uses and resources. Manage for roaded natural recreation.
The goal for summer elk habitat in this management area is to manage 109,444 acres to achieve at least 75 percent of habitat potential; 310,544 acres to achieve at least 50 percent of habitat potential; and 114,225 acres to achieve at least 25 percent of habitat potential. Specific methods of how to achieve this will be determined on a site-specific basis during project planning.

RESOURCE ELEMENT STANDARDS

The Forestwide management direction included in Chapter II of this Plan applies to this management area.
RECREATION
Dispersed Recreation
Visual Resources
1. Manage for roaded natural recreation.
2. Interim visual quality objectives are modification or maximum modification. Adopted VQOs will recognize sensitive (Sensitivity Level 1 and 2) viewpoints and travel routes.
WATER
1. Meet established fishery/water quality objectives for all prescription watersheds asshown in Appendix A.
ROADS
Trails
1. Construct and reconstruct primarily to achieve timber management objectives.
2. Maintain trails to provide for user safety commensurate with use.
PROTECTION
Fire Management
1. Wildfire management strategies are control, confine, and contain. Specifics on implementation, shall depend upon location, expected fire behavior, and values at risk. Decision criteria shall be specified in the Fire Management Action Plan.
2. Planned ignitions, when within prescription, will be allowed to burn to enhance resource values.

MANAGEMENT AREA 17 (104,529 acres)

A. Description

Management Area 17 consists primarily of forested lands that have a high to medium degree of visual sensitivity. These lands have a range of physical and biotic environments as determined by soil, slope, aspect, elevation, and climatic factors. Timber productivity classes 3, 4, 5, and 6 are represented in these areas. This management area occurs Forestwide on the nonclassified portions of the Forest. This management area contains inclusions of other management areas as shown below:
In addition to the 104,529 acres mapped for this management area there are approximately 6,680 acres of this management emphasis which occur as inclusions in other management areas.

Is the project in a designated Idaho Roadless Area (IRA)? No If yes, which one?
Is the project in a congressionally designated area, ex. Wilderness Area, Wild & Scenic River Corridor, Research Natural Area, Historic Trail, etc.? No
Are there Floodplains or Wetlands in the project area? Yes
Are there Municipal Watersheds in the project area? No If yes, which one?
Is the project located in an RHCA? Yes -- partly
Describe the Existing Conditions of the project area. The dominant feature of the project area is the adjacent Big Creek Meadows, which is characterized by various wetland species. The remainder of the project area is vegetated with predominately upland vegetation and timber of mixed species, along with smaller areas of riparian vegetation. Large parts of the area have been burned over by the recent McGuire fire. Evidence of considerable historic mining activity exist throughout the area.
Describe the Desired Conditions of the project area. The project site will be returned to as close to original conditions as practicable through concurrent reclamation and applied mitigation measures.
What is the Purpose and Need for the proposed action*? The purpose of the project is to approve Gold Lion Resource's Plan Of Operations to explore for mineral resources on National Forest System lands in the area of the proposed action. In accordance with 36 CFR 228.5, the Forest Service is required to determine whether to approve the Plan, as proposed, or to require changes or additions to the Plan deemed necessary to minimize adverse environmental effects and to provide for reclamation of surface resources (36 CFR 228.8).

Describe the Proposed Action.

Gold Lion Resources of Henderson, Nevada proposes to conduct exploration drilling operations south of Orogrande, Idaho. The proposal is for a total of 52 drill sites in two areas.

- The first area is located just south of Orogrande between the confluence of Crooked River and the West Fork of Crooked River. Four sites will be drilled in this area. Access to the first area is by State Highway 14 (South Fork) to Forest Development Road 233, then on Road 233 to just past the junction of Road 233 and Road 311 to the first four sites.
- The second area is located in the general area of the West Fork of Big Creek. The remainder of the drill sites are located in this area. The second area is accessed via Road 311 south to the Big Creek Meadows area.
- Approximately 3,500 feet (15 feet wide) of temporary road will need to be constructed to provide access to some of the drill sites. Total surface disturbance of the temporary roads will be approximately 2 acres.
- Drill pads will be offset from the existing road prism to provide for passage of motorized traffic.

Depending upon availability, the 4-inch holes will be drilled using two truck/track mounted or skid mounted core drill rigs. Each drill site is approximately 30 feet x 50 feet in size, and may be slightly larger or smaller depending on slope and other conditions at a particular site.

- The number of holes drilled in each site will vary and will be dependent on results of ongoing drilling.
- The holes will be drilled to a maximum of 1500 feet deep, but may be adjusted as targets become more defined.
- Total surface area of all drill sites will be approximately 1.9 acres.
- As drilling is nearing completion at one site, the next site will be prepared ahead of time to minimize the amount of time the drill rig will need to sit idle.

A sump or infiltration gallery approximately 6 feet wide by 8 feet deep by 15 feet long will be dug at each site to contain drill fluid and to allow drill cuttings to settle out.

- No drill additives are anticipated to be used. However, if required, all drilling additives will be biodegradable.

This project will require water withdrawal from nearby streams. A water use permit will be obtained from the Idaho Department of Water Resources.

- All water withdrawal sites will be reviewed by Forest Service specialists before water is taken from any stream.

The operator will be using various pieces of equipment to support drilling, incluing but not limited to:

- RC Drill Truck Mounted
- Core Drill
- Power Pack – Drill Core
- Portable Rod Storage
- Rubber Tired Forklift
- ATVs
- Pickup Trucks
- Water Truck
- Fuel/Lube Truck
- Water Pumps

People involved with the Project will be limited to the drill crew, geologist, and occasional corporate or consulting staff. It is expected that the drill crews and other support staff will stay in Elk City for housing.

List the Design Feature / Mitigation Measures * to be included with the Proposed Action.

General Requirements (NOTE: These are general requirements for mining related activities. **Not all listed requirements are relevant to this proposed action.** All requirements that *are* relevant to this proposal will be adhered to.)

1. Notify District Ranger or minerals administrator at least 48 hours before any work is to begin.

2. Wash all vehicles and equipment used at the site before being brought onto National Forest system lands to prevent the spread of noxious weeds, seeds or propagules.

3. Avoid disturbance of wetlands and stream riparian zones.

4. Avoid working on saturated soils. Exploration activities must cease to avoid sedimentation into intermittent streams if excessive storm water or ground water runoff is occurring.

5. Prevent discharge of water into any live stream or wetland. To avoid erosion and discharge impact to streams, all activities (including drilling, construction of pads, hand-dug sumps, and any overland travel) will be kept at least 164 feet (50 m) from flowing water that is down gradient.

6. Place weed free straw bales or install silt fence in places as identified by a Forest Service representative to minimize sediment migration from stockpiles and disturbed ground.

7. Obtain prior approval from the Forest Service for cutting or removal of trees or other large live vegetation. Downfall may be removed as needed.

8. Set aside cleared slash and green vegetation (e.g., bear grass) during test pit construction. Remove vegetation in clumps, if possible, with the soil mass intact. Store excavated topsoil and subsoil in separate stockpiles to be used during reclamation. Temporarily replant vegetation clumps in the topsoil stockpile.

9. Maintain only one (1) active pit or trench open at any one time. Reclamation may be occurring at one (1) other pit or trench concurrently.

10. To help alleviate the need for field crew to decide if fish are present in water withdrawal locations, a 1/8” screen will be installed on pump intake hoses even when utilizing a 5-gallon bucket with drilled holes. Water withdrawals will be located on small, high gradient streams as far up creek drainages as feasible to avoid habitat used by fish and sourced from streams under existing permits from the State of Idaho.

11. Collect process water in the existing pit. Regulate discharge to prevent overtopping the pit, and/or land apply excess water on a site designated by the Forest Service. Application sites will typically be natural sumps or depressions, pits or trap(s) that avoid impacts to wetlands or streams and minimizes impacts to other surface resources. Application rate will be such that overland flow is avoided and a natural infiltration occurs through forest duff.

12. Backfill and reclaim each test pit as soon as testing has been completed for that site.

13. Follow the State of Idaho Best Management Practices (BMPs) for all surface disturbing activities, reclamation, and abandonment. BMPs are outlined in the Best Management Practices for Mining in Idaho

Small NEPA IDT/resource specialists are listed below. Contact them if you have any questions regarding their resource for your project.

Botany – Mike Hays, mike.hays@usda.gov; 983-4028
Fisheries – Derrick Bawdon, derrick.bawdon@usda.gov; 963-4211
Heritage – Christy Mog, christy.mog@usda.gov; 935-4269
Hydrology – Cynthia Valle, cynthia.valle@usda.gov; 963-4203
Minerals – Marty Jones, martin.jones@usda.gov; 983-5158
Recreation – Carol Hennessey, cahennessey@usda.gov; 935-4270
Soils – Alex Rozin, alexandra.rozin@usda.gov, 842-2100
Wild and Scenic River – Chris Noyes, chris.noyes@usda.gov; 935-4251
Wildlife – Jim Lutes, james.r.lutes@usda.gov; 963-4202

Small NEPA Planner – Jeff Chynoweth, james.chynoweth@usda.gov; 935-4260